



## water affairs

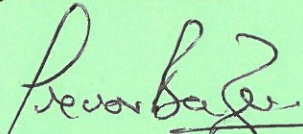
Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: 2/1/5/1

### MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

#### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 3424 FOR WRITTEN REPLY


A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr S Mokgalapa (DA); is attached for your consideration.

  
ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 14/12/2010.

*This matter has been discussed with DWR and they are satisfied with the resp - sc.*

#### DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

  
MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP  
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 2010/12/14

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 3424

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19 NOVEMBER 2010  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 38)

**3424. Mr S Mokgalapa (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:**

- (1) What are the impacts on water resources from mining operations that use hydraulic fracking;
- (2) whether the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, deals with the impacts on water from gas drilling; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, how was this conclusion reached;
- (3) whether her department has any policies or guidelines in place that govern the use of hydraulic fracking in gas extraction; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether she will meet with the Minister of Mineral Resources on the impacts on water by the use of hydraulic fracking; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (5) whether she will consider not to approve any operation that intends using hydraulic fracking in the extraction of gas; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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**REPLY:**

- (1) The use of hydraulic fracking in the oil and gas industry can result in the following:
  - The contamination of groundwater resources if the fracturing fluids are not pumped out. This can also lead to reaction between the formation minerals simulation fluids and water retention in the formation;
  - The drop in groundwater level due to the huge amount of water used for the process;
  - The contamination from the storage of oil and gas waste on the surface if it is not properly isolated or contained.
- (2) Yes. The National Water Act does provide for any activity or process or situation that may cause or is likely to cause any water pollution including gas drilling.
- (3) Yes. The Department has the best practice mining policies and guidelines, but not specific to gas mining.
- (4) No. At this stage it is not necessary.
- (5) Although there are best practices for using hydraulic practice more research is needed and even so each case must be treated individually.

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